Value of journalism in the high school curriculum

Geneva E. Foss
The University of Montana

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THE VALUE

of

JOURNALISM IN THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

-by-

GENEVA E. FOSS

B.A., State University of Oregon, 1925

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

State University of Montana

1937

Approved:

Chairman of Board of Examiners

Chairman of Committee on Graduate Study
THE VALUE OF JOURNALISM
IN THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

INTRODUCTION

This thesis, presented in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts at the University of Montana, was written after a state-wide survey of Washington had been conducted. There is, so far as the writer of this thesis knows, no comprehensive treatment of this topic.

My plan was to discover what is being done in Washington in junior and senior high school journalism and to discover the reactions of those who are directing the work in journalism and also observers of the work. In that way, it was possible to determine the value of the newspaper to the school.

Definite instruction in journalism in the junior and senior high schools is so new that it is yet in a formative stage. From the answers to the questionnaire which was sent out (see page 82 of the appendix) as a means of obtaining the factual information and from the writer's own experience as a director of a newspaper in a junior high school, conclusions have been drawn and suggestions offered which it is hoped will make clear the very definite value of journalism in the high school curriculum.
The Value of Journalism in the High School Curriculum

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The Value of Journalism in the High School Curriculum

CHAPTER I—ENROLLMENT

Journalism, or news writing as it is often called, is fast becoming an integral part of the high school curriculum. From hamlet to city, inclusive, journalism is in evidence; grade schools, junior high schools and senior high schools are offering it.

"From an extra-curricular activity regarded with skepticism by school executives, journalism has progressed in fifteen years to one of the most valuable composition courses in the high school," writes a high school teacher.1

"Today no state course of study in high school English is complete unless a part of the text is given over to newswriting, and many states have a separate course of study in journalism."

Another writer gives a similar expression on the growth of journalism, or newswriting. In part, he says:

1. Mo Coy, Myra L., "Why Offer a Course in High School Journalism?", in School and Society, 36 (August 20, 1932), p. 244-6
"Ten or fifteen years ago few school papers were published except in larger high schools." 2

The next question which naturally arises is, "What is the probability of rearing this so-called 'curriculum' infant?"

"On the basis of studies made this last year (referring to a survey being made), I venture to predict that within the next five years ninety percent of the high schools of the country with 300 students or more will have at least one publication; and of those with an enrollment under 300, half will have a publication." 3

In the addition of journalism to the high school curriculum the state of Washington has been no exception. In the survey conducted throughout the state during the school year of 1934–35, junior and senior high schools with an enrollment of 250 to 2715, inclusive, were studied. A total of 100 questionnaires was mailed out; of this number, 62 schools replied that they offered journalism.


These 68 were used as the basis of this study. Questionnaires from the remaining 32 schools were returned; so 100 per cent returns were obtained.

Below is a chart showing enrollment of schools covered:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2715</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2650</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2495</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2300-2350</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2200</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2100</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1425</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1300-1325</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1200-1296</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1140-1160</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000-1040</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900-990</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>896</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700-764</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600-670</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-590</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400-490</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-375</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250-278</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHART I.

If one were asked to estimate what the average enrollment of the schools covered by this survey happened to be, he probably would go astray. The median enrollment is 622. The peak was 2715 while the low score was 250.
Of the 68 issuing papers, approximately 40 per cent (or 29 schools) issue weeklies; 17 schools have bi-weeklies; 11, monthly periodicals; eight issue the papers at no special time. One school has a paper four times a week; another, every three weeks; and two, twice a month. (See chart II on the following page.)
CHART II.

FREQUENCY

A. .......weekly ............ (29)
B. .......bi-weekly ........ (17)
C. .......monthly .......... (11)
D. .......irregular intervals. (8)
E. .......4 times a week.... (1)
F. .......every 3 weeks..... (1)
G. .......twice a month.... (2)

Scale...1/3" equals 1 paper
The form of high school newspapers, published by the schools responding to the questionnaire, varies from a complete paper printed by a commercial printer outside the school to a section in the town paper.

Figures obtained in the survey show four main classifications:

**CHART IX----FORMATS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Number of Schools Using Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Printed by commercial printer outside the school</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mimeographed</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed by students in the school</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other means: Ditto, section in the town paper</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER II
Types of Advisers Selected

Of especial interest, as much of the success of the publication rests upon it, is the selection of an adviser.

Evidently school boards and school administrators are recognizing the advisability of hiring teachers who have had training and experience in journalism. In the past, it was all too often that an English teacher — just because she was an English teacher — had to handle whatever newspaper activities the school had. This same teacher had taken no training in journalism — even a very elementary course.

Further, she had never had any actual experience on a real newspaper. Because it is necessary to be trained in this subject just the same as in any other field, teachers of newspapering now are hired on the basis of their preparation. Of the 65 teachers cooperating in this survey, 50 of them said that they had definite training. There were 40 English teachers with journalistic training; five were special journalism teachers, with the school paper taking their entire school day; five were teaching something other than English, but in each case the individual had received definite journalistic training.

Although this sounds most encouraging, some remarks made by these instructors cannot be overlooked. Seven said that they had taken but six to twelve weeks of training in journalism. Training for others varied from six weeks of work on a country newspaper to a
college degree in journalism, the latter combined with experience on
a daily newspaper and in an advertising office. Only two were unhappy
in the teaching of news; they said that simply because they were Eng-
ish teachers, the job was thrust upon them even though they had open-
ly expressed lack of interest in the work.

About ten years ago the trend was to issue school papers through
extra-curricular clubs. At that time the news sheets issued re-
lected obviously the manner in which they were prepared. A period or
two a week — sometimes fifteen minutes and sometimes longer — did not
permit a careful check-up on style, headlines, copyreading, proof-read-
ing, lay-out and balance that should be an integral part of every
well-managed publication, regardless of circulation. Now that so many
schools favor regular news classes, a marked improvement in the qual-
ity of school papers as a whole is noted. National press associations,
particularly scholastic press associations, will bear out this state-
ment in figures given and in conclusions drawn from those statistics.

For the methods now in use throughout the state of Washington,
see Chart IV (following page). This shows how the different schools
carry on the activities tied up with the publication of the paper.

*Devoted particularly to the improvement of scholastic journalism are
publications of some of the nation's outstanding scholastic press
associations. The School Press Review, official journal of the "Col-
umbia Scholastic Press Association" of Columbia University, New York
City, and Skill and Scroll, official organ of the "National Association
of Journalism Directors" (published at Medill School of Journalism,
Chicago, Illinois) include articles from time to time showing the
improvement of school newspapers. The University of Minnesota puts out
a similar magazine for the "National Scholastic Press Association."
CHART IV.

How the Schools Issue the Paper

*************** A

*************** B

********** C

******** D

* E

* F

A. Journalism classes. (23)
B. Journalism class... (19)
C. Volunteer group.... (14)
D. Extra-curricular club............... (10)
E. English class...... (1)
F. Roll room......... (1)
Aims of the school papers issued throughout the state vary.
Twenty-five of the 68 advisers claim a major aim is "to develop
school spirit."

Rated next in importance, according to 23, is the necessity to
provide "student expression." Personally, I believe that this aim
cannot be over estimated. Motivation is every teacher's goal; where
motivation exists, progress and interest in the subject are very
evident.

No matter what one's profession may be, is it not true that his
ability to express himself (orally or in writing) clearly adds greatly
to the value of one's technical knowledge? What good is knowledge if
a person is not able to pass it along intelligibly to others? If
Pasteur had hidden his discoveries, what value would his knowledge
have been to humankind? If Byrd or Lindbergh had permitted his dis-
coveries to moulder, would not society have been robbed?

Are not discoveries news? The person who, understandingly, expres-
ses his news is an asset to society. The club woman, the lodge man,
the lawyer, the minister, the tax collector, the railway clerk, the
teacher -- each finds value in communicating (orally or in writing)
his successes and achievements or those of his group. These successes
and achievements are news. If the individual wishes an audience, he
must reveal his attainments. In short, news training aims to improve
one's power of expression.

The high school student, like the adult -- Admiral Byrd or Mr.
Average Citizen -- enjoys improving his powers of expression. Watch
the student when he reads his story in the school paper. His eyes beam
when he displays to all of his fellow reporters and schoolmates
his parents, other relatives and friends, too -- the paper; simultaneously he points out his contribution to the school paper. While the first printed story is an indescribable thrill, the glamor does not wear off.

Just "listen in" - without being discovered - on conversation around the news office. Writing becomes a problem of life; educators agree that to make learning effective, it is necessary to make school situations parallel life situations. Frequently, reporters will be heard making such remarks as these, "The sentences in this story of mine were rather monotonous. Didn't you think that I had too many choppy sentences?" Or, you may hear this, "I didn't like the lead I wrote to this story; I found a 'dandy' in last night's New York Times (or, substitute any other commercial newspaper); I plan to use one like it in my next assignment."

In other words, a child while pleased with his work is eager to improve; just compliment him on some rather clever sentence he wrote or an original manner he used in presenting his facts. Then you'll see how eager he is to maintain a reputation he believes he has established for himself. Criticism of this sort --even for the poor writer-- means more than a negative approach, no matter how sincere you may be in your advice.

Did you ever notice any desire to write better themes just for the sake of writing better themes? Possibly you have in very rare cases. Are the public schools for the rare cases only? You'll have to agree that they are not; they are for the masses. Then, if
you wish to improve the "masses", the news writing angle provides one possible solution.

Vocational experience was listed by 21 as another aim of the school paper. Through work on the school paper, coupled with field trips to local newspapers, printing plants, interviews with prominent persons and so on, a student can decide not only if he is qualified for the field of journalism but also if he will be happy in his work. No matter what the job is, happiness in it is about half the battle of being. Some students who had never thought of journalism as a possible means of livelihood for themselves find they have a so-called "flare" for the subject after they have tried their hand at it in junior or senior high school.

To distribute school news was mentioned by 16. This phase of the paper goes beyond the four walls of the school; a show of hands in any news class - or in other classes in the school - reveals that the majority of students take their papers home. Why do they do it? They are anxious for their parents to see the paper, and the parents want to read it.

"Tom" or "Mary", no matter how much school news he may "carry home" verbally, never tells all that the school paper reveals to the parents -- and stories in the paper are not colored to fit any particular slant, either. Besides, there are members of the school board, state officials, other schools, advertisers and a wide range of individuals who receive and read the publication.
For example, some outside agencies - connected more or less directly with the school - often request a certain number of copies of some particular issue because some story in that paper seemed valuable to the outsider. To be specific, a national officer of the Camp Fire movement had been visiting in a home where the school paper happened to be lying on the davenport. As she sat there, her attention was directed to a front-page account of Camp Fire activities. Immediately a request for copies to be sent to national headquarters was made. This is just one of numerous similar requests.

"The school paper extends, " according to an article in the N.E.A. Journal, 4 "beyond the school walls as most schools circulate these publications to the homes. Because of the great possibilities of this medium, the Division of Publications of the N.E.A. has undertaken to encourage high school publications."

To promote school interest was an aim of 10 papers. Being present even just once when the school paper is issued will prove that the school as a whole is interested in its publication or publications. Every one, subscriber and non-subscriber, practically "devours" the paper, front page to back page, inclusive.

Some students who may not subscribe on the basis of not being interested in the paper" may be observed craning their necks to read over the shoulder of their companions; later, they may be seen picking up dropped or forgotten papers around the classrooms or halls. A search of lockers will reveal copies of the school paper, and included are lockers of non-subscribers. Discussion of current school affairs as well as the promotion of forthcoming projects will stimulate real interest.

Harry S. Bunker, quoted below, believes that school interest does run high in publication. He says:

"The high school group can be reached successfully only through high school publications. Many students read local papers, but at best their reading of these publications is spasmodic and aimless....The high school paper is read with avid interest, usually from beginning to end." 5

5. Harry S. Bunker, "The Business Department of School Publications," page 46; Lombard Press; Iowa City, Iowa; 1927
Motivation for English, listed by nine, seems to me to overlap with providing student expression.

While only five advisers said that an aim of their paper was to "provide knowledge of what constitutes a good newspaper," I believe that this aim should receive more attention. Commercial subjects are taught; students there learn to distinguish good from poor letters through their study of various examples; in manual arts, poor and good finish and workmanship are contrasted; and on and on goes the parade of the same principle.

Journalism, if properly taught, should show what makes a good newspaper by comparing and contrasting the nation's best with the school's poorest.

No textbook in existence, as far as I am concerned, can ever point out all the differences that can be cited by actual contact with commercial papers. School papers should be reserved for reading purposes; commercial papers, the "masters" in the field, provide the core of the course. It is worthwhile to imitate the masters; it is a glaring mistake to allow school newspapers to be put out in poor shape on the basis that some teachers do.

For example, some teachers have remarked, "Well, these students aren't old enough to write good headlines," or, "It isn't how well these stories are written that counts."

Such an attitude is most unprofessional. Aren't pupils in school to learn? Well, then, they'll never learn the difference between good and poor any earlier in life; there's no better time to start than NOW.
Character traits are in for their share of discussion these days— and rightfully so. Only four persons listed this as an aim of the school paper. The writer of this thesis has no way of knowing whether the advisers merely overlooked the matter or not.

The aim, however, should be somewhere near the top. Since we mix with others all our life—unless we go to some distant, deserted isle— it is obvious that we should learn to get along with others, peacefully. No other school activity gives any more opportunity for team work than does the school publication. When one says, "team", basketball, football or some other sport usually flashes into one's mind. Those sports are seasonal; the same is true of a cast for a play. The team or cast practices hard while it practices; but as soon as the season or production is over, then the group is in for a vacation—possibly for just a short time; possibly for the rest of the year. At any rate, there is a lull, or resting period.

Such isn't the case in newspaper work. The paper goes on regularly throughout the school year; so perfect team work is needed there, too, if the school is to receive its publication at regular times.

Three persons listed these: To teach intelligent reading of commercial papers, to reflect the life of the school, to foster leadership, to provide money for the school. Intelligent reading of commercial papers overlaps with that section, "What constitutes
Through the study of the replies we discover that the paper records the history of the school. Occasionally students or adults may say, "Well, I can't see why this is in the school paper. I knew all about it anyway."

In the vernacular, "Mebbe so, mebbe so," would be the reply. Not every one in the school knew every angle of the case; those reading critics should be reminded that the paper was not written expressly for them. It possesses a nation-wide reading public if the paper carries on the extensive exchange that it should. Further, the school paper is not intended solely for giving information. It is also published for the sake of "reflecting" or "recording" history in the making — history of the institution. Many persons like to think of the year's bound copies of the school paper as a history book — written by the school, written about the school and written for the school — for use for many years to come. Further, the paper is to provide a medium for written expression. Granting all this does not mean that a paper should recall past events to the exclusion of the future. It is to be remembered that news — news of the future — is the keynote.

In short, a school paper is a mirror.

"The school paper provides an extra-curricular activity that possesses great educational value. . .

. . . A school paper is a group enter-
prise that serves as a house organ, and as such it must be a mirror of the everyday life and progress of the institution.

To develop leadership is one of the American principles of education. Work on the staff of the school publication is one avenue for developing this quality known as leadership. To see that the paper comes out on time, that it lives up to the qualities set by the nation's best as well as to see that peace and harmony reign over the staff will bring out leadership if even latent powers are present.

There is no more important officer in the school than that of editor-in-chief. This office should develop tact in a student; a spirit of friendship and loyalty to teachers, pupils and the school as a whole; and it ought also to develop cooperation and happiness - a happiness that the student has been of service to his school.

On the following page appears Chart V which summarizes the aims just described.

---

CHART V.

**Aims**

- develop school spirit
- provide student expression
- provide vocational guidance
- distribute school news
- inform parents
- promote school interest
- motivate English composition
- analyze good papers
- increase powers of observation
- bring out spirit of cooperation
- teach responsibility
- develop good character traits
- teach accuracy
- write the school's history
- teach intelligent reading of newspapers
- reflect the life of the school
- develop leadership
- advertise school plays, etc.
- encourage scholarship
- give impartial support to all activities
- teach tact, promptness
- develop friendship among students

**KEY:**

7 equals 1 paper listing the idea as an aim
CHAPTER XV

Problems

Probably the most completely answered section of the questionnaire was "problems." According to their frequency mentioned, the diagram presented below was prepared. Because problems are self-explanatory, no detailed account of them is herewith given.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROBLEM</th>
<th>NUMBER LISTING IT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selection of staff</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting the deadline</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proofreading</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting sufficient assignments</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copyreading</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing headlines</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty does not cooperate with the staff</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of cooperation between printer and staff</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in making layout or dummy</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adviser has too many other activities</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chart VI (Cont'd.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Number Listing It</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enough efficient typists are not available..............................5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff lacks a special room and all necessary equipment to carry on......2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the news work has to be done outside the school day..............1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony between the advertising and editorial staff is a minus quantity.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...
CHAPTER V

STAFF

Many teachers said that the chief difficulty encountered in the selection of the staff was due to the fact that the editorship of the paper - and in some instances several other "top" members of the staff - was by tradition a political job instead of being based on fitness for the work. In that case, the popular student rather than the one best fitted for the work was placed in charge.

Other teachers were similar to the "old woman who lived in the shoe and had so many children that she didn't know what to do."

Strange as it may seem - maybe Ripley would like the idea - some of these teachers just mentioned said that they had so many students of equal ability that it was next to impossible to select the best.

In contrast, another instructor claimed that he never got well enough acquainted with his students to know which ones would be the most efficient.

Other comments were:

"As soon as the staff is trained to be efficient, it 'moves on!'

"Getting people interested in news is my main difficulty."
"Evident is a lack of resourcefulness and reliability."

"I have to use those enrolled in journalism, and these students are not necessarily the best students."

"Due to a conflict in schedule — that is, some students who would like to take news but who are required to take something else the same period — I often lose the very best members of the staff."

"There are far too few boys interested."

"
Chief difficulties with circulation were that the "alumni need to be caught" and "roll room teachers don't seem to 'push' subscriptions, particularly with underclassmen."

More than half - 40 schools - reported absolutely no difficulty with financial support; yet, it was listed near the top of problems. In those schools where finance was a serious problem, a common statement was that the school board ruled, "Merchants must NOT be solicited for ads," and that the "School board shall in no way whatsoever be responsible for any debt incurred by any school within the district in the issuance of a school paper."

An unfriendly attitude of the board and the exorbitant cost of printing has made a school paper an impossibility in some towns. Some sympathetic boards have not been able to subsidize papers that do not have enough ads to cover the cost of printing.

Comments on the remaining problems included:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROBLEM</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Headlines | This is a very serious problem; the pupils write some heads that are "wooden."
| | There are mechanical difficulties in getting the printer to set up what was requested.
| | To get variety in words is hard.
| | The printer doesn't have a variety of type which "cramps" the style of the paper.
| | "Trite - fearfully trite headlines," was the answer of one teacher.
<p>| | &quot;We have absolutely no problem at all with heads,&quot; wrote one teacher. (Pardon the personal comment, but the author of this thesis sees frequently copies of the above-mentioned &quot;problem proof&quot; teacher's school papers. Can it be that this self-styled authority doesn't realize that the atrocious headlines which he permits to go through violate practically every rule of good headline style?) |
| Deadline | Carelessness in meeting the deadline requirement seems to be the motto of some staff workers. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROBLEM</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deadline (cont'd.)</td>
<td>&quot;When deadline arrives,&quot; says one instructor,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;We're always in a 'mess.'&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To meet deadline, several claimed that they had to take much out-of-class time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Now reporters are very slow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibility is lacking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layout or Dummy</td>
<td>The adviser has to make the dummy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The size of the paper makes variety and balance a &quot;struggle.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation with the faculty</td>
<td>Many teachers don't see beyond the boundaries of their own individual subjects; they continually &quot;put off&quot; reporters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The faculty doesn't sense &quot;news.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jealousy on the part of a few instructors results in a cool and callous treatment of reporters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation with the printer</td>
<td>He too often doesn't realize that students have something to do besides just wait for and work on proofs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Just because these problems have been, in most instances, negative, no one should infer that the issuance of a school paper is not worth while. A review of the section on "Aims" will serve as an excellent antidote.

Practically all of the problems of the staff can be solved by a reorganization of the staff. One high school adviser claims that she is not handicapped when part of the staff "moves on" because the reporting is done by the juniors while the seniors write editorials, plan lay-outs and control the policies of the publication. A junior high school adviser has three divisions; the beginners' class, made up of 81's, studies headlines, leads, stories, proof reading marks and interview technique. The next class, composed of 89's, provides the reporters. The advanced group (9A's) perform duties similar to the high school seniors on the staff of a school newspaper. Efficiency is thereby maintained by these teachers, for there are trained workers to replace the group lost by graduation.
CHAPTER VI

Reactions

To show that outsiders are interested in the school paper, teachers commented on what they heard from parents, business men and other adults. The student angle was also discussed.

Here are some of the reactions to the school paper:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents were so well pleased with certain stories that they bought extra copies to &quot;send the folks back home&quot; and to friends.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some parents send their children back to school to get the day's paper which was forgotten.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By-line stories drew favorable comments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At P.T.A. meetings, parents have commented on the publicity given the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
organization's affairs and policies.

Parents depend on the school paper for official announcements.

Parents complain of errors pertaining to their young - an indisputable fact that parents DO read the school paper.

Business men say that they like the way the advertisements have been set up.

Some business men report an increase in their sale of specific merchandise advertised in the school publication.

Praised frequently by parents is the absence of objectionable advertising - tobacco, alcoholic drinks and things of a similar nature.
Feature stories came in for their share of praise.

Three advertisers in one town reported that the school paper was the "best advertising medium in the town."

Students relate parental comments.

Good attendance at school plays and other entertainments indicates the advertising value of the paper to the school.

Pupils not on the staff praise classmates for some well-written story and often — in the case of unsigned stories — ask the adviser or editor who wrote such-and-such an article that appealed particularly to the reader.
From other schools within the town and from schools in other school districts come requests for space in the local school paper.

"We have more ads than we can handle," wrote one adviser of a mimeographed paper.

Chambers of Commerce, patriotic organizations and similar groups ask for publicity in the school paper.

With the local paper, 42 of the 68 covered in this survey report definitely that there IS a tie-up between the school and the local paper; nineteen said none existed. The remainder, or seven, failed to answer the question.

Some local papers "take-on" student staffs for a day or two in the course of the school year and give field trips at intervals throughout the year. Every week some papers print sections written exclusively by student reporters or take stories verbatim from the school paper. Many commercial publications are always ready to give expert advice on the proper handling of news as well as extend a valuable cut courtesy.
CHAPTER VII
Correlation

There is a definite correlation between journalism and other subjects in the curriculum.

Correlations cited by teachers answering the questionnaire were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>NO. CITING CORRELATION</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>News provides experience and training in writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sentence structure is markedly improved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vocabularies are increased - particularly in regard to synonyms and antonyms. (One teacher wrote, &quot;If you don't believe me, ask the school librarian who &quot;wears out&quot; the school's copies of such references.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Only superior students &quot;rate&quot; in news; hence, the correlation.*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Astounding as it may seem, one teacher replied, "There is no correlation at all between journalism and English."
Even as far back as 1918, teachers realized the correlation between journalism and English. Here is what one teacher wrote:

"Where are we headed in the teaching of English composition?

"In no other subject have school men been so lost concerning the aim of the work... Personally, I see leadership in the teacher of journalism, including both magazine and newspaper writing. The old ideals (in the ordinary English class) failed to stimulate the class.

Writing with nothing further in view than getting a grade or developing some quality like fluency, accuracy or self-expression -- admirable as these qualities are -- is but a tame performance.

"Journalistic ideal will supply the

---

stimulus we have long needed for getting creative results that might spell authorship, note the nature of the instruction....

"Above all the ordinary student in the journalistic class will become, through the training involved in hunting live material, thoroughly conscious of the world about him. He will learn to look at it; to listen to it; to read about it."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>NO. CITING CORRELATION</th>
<th>COMMENTS (Cont'd.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Typing</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Students of news use, or practice, what they learn in the commercial course.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cutting of stencils and operating of the mimeograph machine are correlated with news. If the school paper is mimeographed, the tie-up is self evident. Even if the paper is printed, there still is a connection. Issuing of style sheets, material or bulletins on headlines, blanks for staff records and the like present other angles which, all too often, have been overlooked.

The element, speed, is found in both typing and issuing of copy.

One reply was, "Correlation? Yes, 100 per cent!"
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>NO. CITING CORRELATION</th>
<th>COMMENTS (Cont'd.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Typing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Typing is essential in putting out a paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Accuracy is stressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>There is a constant need of a dictionary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A very practical use of spelling is demonstrated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Fancy&quot; spelling is omitted; words used and spelled are the everyday ones every one needs to know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>&quot;If developing a civic sense isn't here, then where?&quot; asked one adviser.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;If a real reporter needs social science, here is his chance at meeting life situations.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUBJECT</td>
<td>NO. CITING CORRELATION</td>
<td>COMMENTS (Cont'd.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading of community newspapers and those from anywhere and everywhere is a daily essential of reporters and social science students alike.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorthand</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Shorthand offers possibilities for taking notes on lectures, speeches and the like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>This subject is especially valuable as a source of feature stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Accuracy in reporting scores and computing totals is a regular job of any reporter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning to read and to interpret numerous sets of figures - school board reports, budgets, income from taxes, athletic reports, etc. - come through the study of mathematics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUBJECT</td>
<td>NO. CITING CORRELATION</td>
<td>COMMENTS (Cont'd.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
<td>In keeping staff records - the number of tips submitted, inches printed for each reporter - math comes into play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Math, like many other subjects, is often a source of feature stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Modern and ancient languages enter into book reviewing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Names and countries are used extensively in features.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Through exchanges there is a desire to discover where this or that school is as well as to learn something about its locality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Students in art make linoleum blocks, cartoons and cuts of many types; these are used as regular parts of the school newspaper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUBJECT</td>
<td>NO. CITING CORRELATION</td>
<td>COMMENTS (Cont'd.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td></td>
<td>Art students often make charts and posters for the promotion of subscription drives for the paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Signs and posters for exclusive use of news students (Deadline - Thursday, 5:30 p.m., for example) are often the products of art students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;Sound bodies! Sound minds!&quot; wrote an adviser from Tacoma, Washington. (That adviser directs a paper rated exceptionally high throughout the nation.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A reporter who knows a game from playing it in physical education is a more intelligent reporter who can actually analyze plays and results of games.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUBJECT</td>
<td>NO. CITING CORRELATION</td>
<td>COMMENTS (Cont'd.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Relations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>News trains students in the making of contacts with the business world. The interview method is frequently an integral part of social relations - as well as vocational relations or guidance - courses; news teaches interview technique.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students are kept informed about the school as a whole.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Work on the ad staff provides the &quot;laboratory&quot; for the &quot;theory of the class.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual Training</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Making of copy desk, news rack, typing tables, etc. not only shows carry-over to that extent, but it means a manual worker is a wiser and more accurate reporter of manual arts projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUBJECT</td>
<td>NO. CITING CORRELATION</td>
<td>COMMENTS (Cont'd.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clubs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Accurate reports are received from reporters who participate in the club periods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookkeeping</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Keeping of records for the staff as well as the books for circulation and income brings both subjects together.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...
CONCLUSION

From the foregoing survey and from personal experience, the inevitable conclusion to me is that journalism is here to stay. Journalism as a curricular subject is yet in a formative stage. That this work has not been even approximately systematized is indicated by the varied replies to my questionnaire. Yet, it seems from these answers that there is a growing realization of the value of this subject in the curriculum. Its worth is clearly stated in some of the replies and vaguely hinted at in others.

My own belief after seven years of advisership of a high school newspaper is that journalism offers distinct values to a student. Work on a school paper requires extensive reading of commercial newspapers. Any student learns discrimination in news through reading and studying current papers. Possibly his tastes had been running to the sensational or scandalous newspapers; through class discussions and reading as well as work on the staff, the pupil learns what constitutes a good paper and why others are poor. He will, therefore, as an adult appreciate and demand the best in newspapers. The youth of today will, through his understanding of journalism, be able to raise the standard of the next generation. He will enjoy the conservative and frown upon the sensational.

Many students openly confess a hatred for composition or anything that savors of it. "Aw, what's the use of writing a
theme that nobody will ever read and which will be thrown away?"

is the slant of many enrolled in high school English. These
same individuals, the so-called "rebels" in the regular English
class, often take genuine pride, though, in writing stories for
the paper -- themes approached from another angle. Drill on com-
position (rules of punctuation, sentence structure, paragraph
organisation) are put under another light when a student sees an
immediate use for knowing and practicing what the composition book
says is correct.

Grammatical errors - "ain't" and "haven't got no book" - are
corrected because of the pupil's desire to write the best and purest
English that he knows how to write. An error less glaring than that
often results in a spirited staff-wide discussion to know who committed
the error and a firm resolution that the columns of the paper will be
free from similar errors.

When parents profess their faith in student papers, there is
cooperation from the home. Parent-stimulus is a very valuable
factor in raising the standard of work.

The increase in the growth of the number of publications indi-
cates that the value of journalism in the curriculum is accepted by
more than students and advisers, plus the interest of the parents.
Principals and superintendents make a place in the daily schedule
for this subject which at one time was recognized only as
an extra-curricular activity. Credit is allowed for work - sometimes a whole credit, and sometimes a fraction - with the amount of credit being determined by the amount of time spent per week in news class.

The popularity of the subject has extended beyond the limits of a particular community in which a school paper is thriving. The National Education association has done much to encourage the establishing of more school papers and to assist editors of publications in the field. Valuable booklets to show how one school activity can be correlated with another and to explain the community value of a publication have been issued. National contests with awards for outstanding work have been N.E.A. projects.

The National Council of Teachers of English and different English texts within recent years believe that journalism is so vital that no English course is complete unless some time has been devoted to news. The English monograph expresses my sincere belief that purposeful writing is superior to the kind taught years ago.

Staff workers are alert; they know that they have a service to perform, and the best performance is none too good. They are a "hub" for the wheel of student activities. Athletics, drama, music, debate, clubs and hobbies are some of the spokes radiating from the hub; each needs publicity. The reporter sees the need,
his writing has been vitalized. His pride in doing the best he can carries him along with the tide of enthusiasm.

In short, as far as it can be gleaned through the questionnaire and through reading, journalism does offer correlation in countless ways. Since such is the case, journalism will continue to be an integral part of the curriculum; it will attain increasing importance and recognition. Value will be the criterion on which journalism maintains its distinct place in the program of studies.

By way of summary, the real values of journalism in the junior and senior high schools are given below.

THE HIGH SCHOOL PAPER:

(1)-Stimulates the desire to use better English, orally and in writing, at the same time that it offers an avenue for student-expression.

(2)-Provides vocational experience, one of the criteria of modern education.

(3)-Serves as a house organ for the school.

(4)-Is a good advertising medium for activities of the F. of A., the Chamber of Commerce and similar community organizations.

(5)-Promotes school interest.

(6)-Gives technical knowledge of what constitutes a good newspaper, regardless of whether it is commercial or scholastic.
(7)-Encourages extensive reading of commercial and scholastic papers.

(8)-Develops desirable character traits among the staff workers - i.e., dependability, cooperation, ability to get along with others and loyalty.

(9)-Sponsors and assists with student activities - athletics, plays and various campaigns.

(10)-Raises money for school projects - landscaping the school grounds, purchasing of a mimeograph and pictures for classrooms.

(11)-Fosters leadership.

(12)-Records the history of the school.

(13)-Correlates with other subjects in the curriculum.

(14)-Increases an individual's power of observation so that he is able to see beneath the surface of things. For example, a reporter understands human nature better; evasion is easily detected by a reporter who will be all the more alert to "scratch beneath the surface."

(15)-Builds up a technique of interviewing which is valuable in other fields. An adviser claims that school reporters brought back to the vocational guidance class better reports than the other members of the class - "thanks to the news training in how to approach people and what to get and how to get it."
Bibliography


McCoy, Myra L. "Why Offer a Course in High School Journalism?" in School and Society, volume 36, August 20, 1932; pages 244-6.

National Education Journal, "High School Editors Interpret the Schools;" volume 21, May 1932; page 142.


APPENDIX

The survey of the state of Washington was made possible through the cooperation of principals and advisers who filled out the questionnaire reproduced on the next page. Schools with an enrollment of 250 or more students were sent the questionnaire. Those institutions in which journalism was not offered, either as a curricular or an extra-curricular activity, returned the form on which was written, "We have no school paper," or a similar comment. Of the 100 who received the questionnaire, only 88 filled out the form because they were the schools that issue a paper. In order to obtain 100 percent returns, the author of this thesis kept an alphabetical list of those schools receiving the form. As a reply came back, the school was checked. When no reply had been received within about two months' time, a second questionnaire was submitted on the theory that the first had been lost in the mail or misdirected. In a few instances, it was necessary to mail out a third questionnaire. Some teachers wrote that the original form had been lost.
SURVEY TO DISCOVER THE SUPPLEMENTARY VALUES OF JOURNALISM

NAME OF SCHOOL ____________________________ ENROLLMENT ____________________________

CITY ____________________________ COUNTY ____________________________ STATE ____________________________

Do you issue a school paper? Yes ☐ No ☐ Its name is ____________________________

FREQUENCY OF ISSUE Weekly ☐ Bi-weekly ☐ Once a month ☐

FORM Mimeoographed ☐ Printed on a duplicator ☐ Printed by commercial printer outside the school ☐ Printed by students in the school ☐ Other means ____________________________

ADVISER Selected because of training? Yes ☐ No ☐

Because of interest? Yes ☐ No ☐

Regular English teacher with journalism training? Yes ☐ No ☐

Regular English teacher without journalism training? Yes ☐ No ☐

Special journalism teacher? Yes ☐ No ☐

Other class teacher with journalism training? Yes ☐ No ☐

Other class teacher without journalism training? Yes ☐ No ☐

HOW ISSUED The paper is issued by extra-curricular club ☐

Journalism classes ☐

English classes ☐

Volunteer group ☐

Miscellaneous ☐

ORIGIN The paper was first issued ____________________________

It has ☐ (month) (year) and has not ☐ been issued regularly since then with the exception of ____________________________

AIMS What do you consider the chief aims or motives for issuing the paper? ____________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

PROBLEMS What, as an adviser, are the chief difficulties you encounter in regard to:

Selection of the staff ____________________________

Circulation ____________________________

Financial support ____________________________
**Assignments**

**Copyreading**

**Proof-reading**

**Headlines**

**Meeting the "headline"**

**Layout or dummy**

**Cooperation with other members of the faculty**

**Cooperation with the printer if the paper is printed elsewhere than in the school**

**Miscellaneous**

---

**Tie-Up**

Your school paper (does □) (does not □) tie-up with the homes of the school children. What reactions, favorable or unfavorable, have you had to show that the paper does reach the home and is read by the parents?

---

What tie-up, if any, exists between your school paper and the local paper or papers?

---

**Correlation**

Journalism, properly offered in a school, should show some correlation with other subjects offered in the curriculum. What connection, expressed or implied, do you feel exists between journalism as offered and these subjects?

- **English**
- **Social Sciences**
- **Mathematics**
- **Spelling**
- **Geography (commercial or otherwise)**
- **Sciences**
- **Languages**
- **Typing**
- **Shorthand**
- **Others (list them)**

---

**School Service**

How through your paper do you attempt to:

- Instill pep
- Preserve traditions
- Provide encouragement to students at large

**Miscellaneous**
PERSONAL GAINS  What do you and the staff consider each member's gains personally by working on the school publication?

-------

Note: The survey is in conjunction with one being made for a master's thesis in journalism. Your cooperation in filling out and returning this questionnaire as soon as possible will be greatly appreciated. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for your convenience in replying.

Names of teachers, schools or anything personal will not be revealed; their use on this form is merely for checking returns.

Would you like a tabulation of data obtained?  Yes ☐  No ☐

---

After all of the mimeographed questionnaires had been returned to me, a one-page mimeographed tabulation was prepared and sent to each teacher who wished a copy. The data presented in the tabulation is the same as that used for the charts contained in this thesis. All but 11 requested a copy. Some of those who wished a copy accompanied the questionnaire with a personal letter, saying how interested they were in the material being collected. Several "long-distance" friends were thereby established; the author of this thesis made three friends from western Washington, and an exchange of papers and ideas takes place once or twice a year now.